



ADVANCING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE & RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AMONG REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN UGANDA BIDIBIDI REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

CONFLICT INCIDENT REPORT



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1. INTRODUCTION

With support from the European Union, under the *Advancing Peaceful co-existence & Respect for Human Rights among Refugees and Host Communities Project*, KRC UGANDA established community structures comprising a team of local people popularly known as community-based Peace Keepers (CPKs) in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, Yumbe District in West Nile Sub-Region.

Community-based Peace Keepers have been equipped with knowledge and skills and confidence to identify, report, respond to human rights violations and undertake peace building efforts to resolve and manage local conflicts and also support victims of human rights violation including gender-based violence to access justice. The Community Peace Keepers (CPKs) are mandated to periodically monitor, identify, report, mediate and refer conflict related issues and situations to relevant actors for action. The focus is majorly on Human Right Violations, domestic related conflicts involving Gender-based violence, violence against children and women's rights, land conflicts, natural resources related conflicts as well as other intra/inter-tribal/ethnic/cultural conflicts between refugees and host communities.

2. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Through the KRC UGANDA online conflict reporting platform and through the community peace keepers and local leaders, KRC learnt of the violent and bloody tribal clashes in Moyo District. Messages from peace keepers revealed that West Nile Aringa region had been hit by violent tribal clashes in Moyo District. The clashes started on Sunday 7/05/2023 orchestrated by South Sudanese people of Kuku origin over land in Gwere West parish, Moyo District which they claim belongs to South Sudanese Kajokeji County.

The Kuku community from South Sudan SSD reportedly entered Goboro area Kotch Sub County and set ablaze houses in retaliation for the cattle which had been taken by the Aringa of Yumbe. On 9th May 2023 at around 8:00am, Kuku community further attacked Goberi trading center in Gwere west Lefori S/C Moyo district and burnt over 400 grass thatched houses belonging to Aringa tribe who settled in Gwere west. At around 5:pm on 9/5/2023 Aringa tribe of Yumbe retaliated and attacked Kuku tribe of Gwere west Lefori S/C Moyo District and burnt over 20 grass thatched houses, stole over 100 heads of cattle. The stolen cattle were however intercepted by security agencies at Obero Primary School enroute to Yumbe Town. At around 4pm on Wednesday 10th May 2023, suspected Kuku community invaded Goboro area of Kotch S/C in Yumbe District and reportedly burnt grass thatched houses, but were repulsed.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

The Sudanese are accusing the Madi of Moyo and Yumbe Districts in Uganda of extending their administrative structures inside their land. The commissioner of Kajo-Keji county in Southern Sudan, Muki Batali Buli, says Kuku has over 15km stretch of land in Uganda. This claim, that puts Moyo Town Council, parts of Metu and Lefori sub-counties in Moyo and Midigo in Yumbe districts under contest, has since been protested by Ugandan leaders.

Muki asserts that their land extends from Karido River in Sudan to Kelenderia, through Opiro, behind Moyo Secondary School, to Ebikwa River, and Seleseleya to Leya from the east. This

continues westwards to West Eria Hill, Lefori and down to Wano, Sera Jale and Lobulele, Muki says. Muki was quoted saying; "...one of our grandfathers told us Moyo was not a Madi name. It was derived from an Arabic word for water (moyo) when an Arab soldier demanded for water from a Madi citizen behind the present Stanbic Bank, in the heart of Moyo town..." this is a pointer to an endless tribal and territorial conflict that will later involve the two independent states.

Sources trace the conflict between Madi to have started in 1916 when the colonialists moved the four clans of Moijo, Litoba, Limi and Louba to Kabi, inside Sudan due to the outbreak of sleeping sickness. The Madi moved in and occupied large parts of Moijo by shifting the traditional border to Kayo. When they returned, they found their land occupied, an event that marked the beginning of the uneasy co-existence. It is alleged that Yumbe administration recently evicted the people of Liwolo in a place called Kilaji. That also, an organised force from Uganda without any justification, attacked and killed innocent civilians in Ajo Boma. Properties were destroyed. This claim however has been denied by the security authorities in Uganda. The Duku accuses and cites the occupation of Goboro by people mainly from Yumbe District and Abaya to Bamure by settlers from Moyo district. They claim that these new occupants are engaged in activities suggesting intentions to settle in these lands permanently. Most important is their engagement in illicit tree logging and charcoal burning, which are hazardous to environment. According to the Constitution of Uganda, the Kuku in Uganda pay allegiance to the Ugandan government, not Sudan.

In 2005, the Sudanese authorities halted a multi-million road construction at Afoji because farmers claimed ownership of the land.

In August 2009, armed Sudanese attacked and stopped the MTN construction work at Jale. In September, another group of armed Sudanese attacked and forced farmers to uproot their crops in Gwere parish in Lefori sub-county near Bamure. Ugandans accused the Sudanese Wild Life Authority of settling 5km inside their country at Pa anjala in Dufile sub-county. However, on their recent visit to Moyo on November 24, President Yoweri Museveni and his Southern Sudan counterpart, Salva Kiir, directed that the road and MTN mast construction continue. They advised the local people to fight poverty, not over a small piece of land.

KRC Uganda observes that this description is a pointer to the fact that the tension is not about to end and requires bi-lateral interventions. This also presents a potentially simmering violent situation that may escalate and spread to the refugee settlements within West Nile and Northern Uganda. Consorted efforts are therefore required to handle the matter once and for all.

4. OBSERVATIONS

If the situation is not quelled between Kuku community and Aringa tribes, this might escalate into the refugee settlement where both ethnic communities has a lineage.

The talk on ground about the tensions between the conflicting communities indicate the possibilities of Kuku community pursuing their stolen cattle into Uganda which might escalate of more violence.

Although the security team has intervened, there is need for engagement with the local leaders beyond the use of the gun power and other machinery. The biggest surprise might emanate from the undertones at the community level.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government needs to regulate refugee movement outside the refugee settlement

- CSO partners implementing activities in the settlement and the host communities need to be conflict sensitive in addressing the current conflict situation and apply do-no-harm principles in their communication and implementation
- There is need for massive sensitization of both refugee and host communities to observe peaceful co-existence across the West Nile region and be alert to report any possible signs of conflict before it escalates into violence
- The security forces, including the army (UPDF) and police are on the ground to prevent violence, protect life and properties using a conflict sensitive approach.



Photo: Member from the Kuku tribe displaying bows and arrows ready to attack the Aringa tribe of Moyo and Yumbe

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